

IOWA OUTDOORS

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.gov

Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653
mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us

June 5, 2007

1. Meeting Set to Discuss Proposed Bird Conservation Area
2. Raising Catfish in Cages – by Joe Wilkinson [Hold until June 7]
3. DNR Offers Volunteers Summer Pastimes
4. Outdoor Journey for Girls has Openings at Summer Camps
5. Iowa Fishing Report

MEETING SET TO DISCUSS PROPOSED BIRD CONSERVATION AREA

TRIPOLI – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will hold a public meeting to discuss a proposed designation of an area (including public and privately owned land) encompassing a 45 mile stretch of the Wapsipinicon River in Bremer, Black Hawk, and Buchanan counties as a state Bird Conservation Area (BCA). The meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m., June 19, at the City Hall, 303 South Main Street in Tripoli.

Creating Bird Conservation Areas is a high priority for the Iowa DNR. “The proposed Wapsipinicon (Wapsi) River BCA is a unique area containing diverse habitats, homes to a medley of bird species considered to be of greatest conservation need,” said Bruce Ehresman, with the DNR’s wildlife diversity program. “From wetland birds like sandhill crane and American bittern, riparian woodland species like red-shouldered hawk and prothonotary warbler, to grassland birds like bobolink and grasshopper sparrow, the Wapsi River and its surrounding uplands provide a perfect setting for what could be Iowa’s eleventh Bird Conservation Area.”

The BCA concept focuses on all-bird conservation at a landscape scale, and the program’s success depends upon partnerships between public agencies, private conservation organizations and private landowners. Each BCA consists of at least 10,000 acres consisting of one or more core areas of permanently protected bird habitat surrounded by large areas of privately owned land that is also good bird habitat. Core public lands are managed intensively for all wild birds, especially those species realizing regional or continental population declines.

Wildlife biologists and private lands specialists work with willing landowners to find ways of improving their properties for birds. The program is entirely voluntary, non-regulatory, and could result in extra incentives for landowners to make bird habitat improvements.

The main core areas for the proposed Wapsipinicon River Bird Conservation Area are comprised of the Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area and Wapsi River Greenbelt.

“The Wapsipinicon River and adjacent uplands, from above Frederika down to Independence, hosts a remarkable assemblage of birds and a great variety of habitats—especially floodplain wetlands, forests, and grasslands,” said Doug Harr, coordinator for the DNR’s wildlife diversity program. “With all the conservation efforts already underway here, I can’t think of a better location for Iowa’s next BCA.”

For more information, contact Harr at 515-281-4815 or Ehresman at 515-432-2823

###

[Hold the Wilkinson column until June 7.]

RAISING CATFISH IN CAGES

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Approaching the wood-and-wire cages, the boat swung left and came up alongside. On board, Cody Davis and Corey Simpson positioned themselves on either side of the 25-gallon half-barrel. With the lid of the floating cage flipped open, they upended the barrel, pouring a stream of little catfish into the cage.

The 13 cages in Diamond Lake, in Poweshiek County, are home to 7,000 catfish for the summer. “The fish are provided to us free. We provide the labor and the food to bring them up to release size,” explains park ranger Ken Vargason, from the Poweshiek County Conservation Department. “They are fed a high protein diet; pellets the size of a pencil eraser. They just grow tremendously.” He, Simpson, a park ranger, and Davis, a seasonal worker, met the Department of Natural Resources hatchery truck at the boat ramp for the transfer.

The story is the same in 25 counties across Iowa. The cages protect the three to six inch fingerlings from largemouth bass and other predators. By about Labor Day, the fish will be 10 to 11 inches long, pretty much out of snack range. Catfish do well in close confinement. Other species would suffer stress, be susceptible to disease or being eaten by larger cage-mates.

The journey begins in southern Iowa, at the Lake Rathbun fish hatchery. There, DNR workers wade through catfish ponds, scooping egg masses out of old milk cans, used as artificial spawning ‘holes’ for brood fish. The eggs are monitored in the hatchery.

As they hatch, the fish are raised and over-wintered there. Late the next spring, it's on to the stocking truck for a trip to one of the small lakes across Iowa.

"For us, it means they spend less time in the hatchery," says Department of Natural Resources fisheries technician Chris Mack. "We supply less food. It frees up space sooner and we have room for other fish. We can drop them off here and they continue their growth."

Along with largemouth bass and bluegill, channel catfish make up the backbone of a fish population in these county park lakes, providing the food chain and scavenger element needed for a healthy population. However, there is virtually no successful catfish reproduction in artificial lakes in Iowa. Any which are spawned would quickly become dinner for bass and other predators. That's why stocking is so critical. And with three months in what amounts to a protected chow line, the little cats get a great head start.

And with that start, they're closer to heading home on an angler's stringer. By next spring, maybe even late this fall, the bigger ones will be in the 'keeper' size range. "I would say in the pound and a half to two pound range, that's when people really enjoy them for eating", says Vargason. "Then, we also have the angler that wants nothing but the big fish. We did have some 20-pound catfish showing up already in the creel survey this year. They've done real well."

###

DNR OFFERS VOLUNTEERS SUMMER PASTIMES

DES MOINES — With summer finally underway, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Keepers of the Land Volunteer Program has a number of opportunities for volunteers to get outside and make natural resources part of this summer's pastime activities.

- **Campground Host Opportunity:** Officials with the DNR are seeking volunteers to serve as campground hosts during the spring and summer camping season. The following parks are in need of campground hosts: Backbone, Lake Wapello, and Dolliver. For more information contact Merry Rankin at 515-281-0878.
- **Raccoon River Clean-up Opportunity:** Officials with the DNR are seeking volunteers to help clean-up the Middle and North Raccoon rivers during their annual Project AWARE weeklong canoe river clean-up event June 16-23. Volunteers are welcome to join for a day or the entire week. Late registration is still available. Event information can be found at www.iowaprojectaware.com. For more information, contact Brian Soenen at 515-205-8587,
- **Watercraft Inspections Opportunity:** Officials with the DNR are seeking volunteers to assist with controlling aquatic invasive species through boater education activities. This opportunity starts immediately and ends Sept. 30. For more information, contact either Kim Bogenschutz or Jason Euchner at 515-432-2823 ext. 103 or 515-432-2823 ext. 118.

- **Prairie Management Opportunity:** Officials at the Prairie Seed Production Plot in Dallas County are seeking volunteers to help with seed production, removing invasive species, harvesting seeds, and planting prairie plugs. This opportunity starts immediately and ends in mid-October. For more information, contact Bill Johnson at 515-543-8319.
- **Park Enhancement Opportunity:** Officials at Volga River State Park are seeking volunteers to assist with various park maintenance needs including mowing, painting, and litter clean-up. This opportunity starts immediately and is ongoing. For more information, contact Tom Halverson at 563-425-4161.
- **Construction Opportunity:** Officials with Wildcat Den State Park are seeking volunteers to help with various park construction projects including roofing and vinyl siding on buildings; scraping and painting bridges; doing masonry work on steam engine boiler; constructing a kiosk; and building new entrance portals for all entrances to the park. This opportunity starts immediately and ends upon project completion. For more information, contact Jim Ohl at 563-263-4337.
- **Recreational Projects Opportunity:** Officials at Green Valley State Park are seeking volunteers to serve as project leaders for various recreational projects including constructing a basketball court, designing a Frisbee golf course, and setting up a volleyball court. This opportunity starts immediately and ends upon project completion. For more information, contact Greg Haley at 641-782-5131.

Visit the Keepers of the Land website at www.keepersoftheland.org for information on these and more volunteer opportunities. For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or at Merry.Rankin@dnr.state.ia.us

###

OUTDOOR JOURNEY FOR GIRLS HAS OPENINGS AT SUMMER CAMPS

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Iowa Women in Natural Resources is hosting three outdoor skills camp this summer for girls age 12 to 15. Called Outdoor Journey (OJ) for Girls, these camps introduce outdoor skills, like canoeing, fishing and camping, to girls in a supportive, hands-on environment.

Activities are led by experts in their field, allowing participants to leave with a newfound confidence in the activity. Instructors are DNR conservation officers, biologists and other personnel, county conservation board naturalists and representatives from other agencies like the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Iowa State University.

The first camp is June 13 – 15, at Springbrook Conservation Education Center, north of Guthrie Center. New this year is a camp offered at Black Hawk County Conservation Boards Hickory Hills Park, near Waterloo, on July 17 – 19. The final camp is Aug. 1-3, at Springbrook Conservation Education Center.

Participants must fill out a form available on the Iowa DNR's website. Go to www.iowadnr.gov, then click on Springbrook Conservation Education Center in the left column toward the bottom. Next, click on camps and workshops and finally on Outdoor Journey for Girls. Send the completed form and a check for \$100 to the address on the bottom of the form.

There are occasions for Pheasants Forever (PF) chapters and other supporting organizations from across the state to provide full or partial sponsorships for participants, even if they are from outside their own counties. For information on potential sponsorships, send an email to outdoorjourneyia@yahoo.com or PF representative Andrea Evelsizer at 319-665-3841 or aevelsizer@pheasantsforever.org

More than 1,500 girls have participated in OJ since it began in 1992.

###

IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of June 5, 2007

www.iowadnr.gov

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Fishing has been fair for 14 to 17-inch walleyes drifting with leeches and night crawlers in 18 to 20 feet of water. Anglers are also catching a few fish from the Grade in the evening with slip bobbers and leeches. Smallmouth bass fishing is good on shallow rock piles throwing curly tail grubs. Largemouth bass fishing is good in Trickle Slough and Hales Slough throwing plastic worms. Bass fishing has also been good at the Grade with leeches and slip bobbers. Northern pike fishing is fair in Anglers Bay. A few bluegills are being caught and Buffalo Run.

West Okoboji (Dickinson): Walleye fishing is good in Millers Bay, Emerson Bay, the North Bay and Smith's Bay. Look for areas with vegetation and rocks in 10 to 20 feet of water. Leeches and night crawlers have both been effective. Casting plastics on points has been effective in the evenings. Northern pike fishing is excellent trolling or casting crankbaits in Millers and Emerson Bays. Bluegill fishing is good around main lake docks and deeper rock piles using small leeches and garden worms. Largemouth bass fishing is good in Millers Bay and the canals. White bass fishing is excellent in Browns Bay and Smiths Bay. Smallmouth bass fishing is fair around Gull Point, Pillsbury Point and Fort Dodge Point.

East Okoboji (Dickinson): Walleye fishing is fair in the evening below the spillway, the Hwy. 9 Bridge, and at the trestle. Bullhead fishing is good on the north end

using night crawlers. Channel catfish fishing is good using minnows and cut bait on the north end.

Center Lake (Dickinson): Bluegill fishing is excellent around submerged brush. Bullhead fishing is excellent using night crawlers.

Silver Lake (Dickinson): Walleye fishing is good for smaller fish using night crawlers. Channel catfish fishing is excellent.

West Fork of the Des Moines River (Emmett): Channel catfish fishing is good around submerged brush using cut bait and night crawlers.

Silver Lake (Palo Alto): Walleye, northern pike and crappie fishing is fair. Bullhead fishing is good

Lost Island (Palo Alto): Bullhead fishing is good for 8 to 10-inch fish

Trumble (Clay): A few 10-12 inch yellow perch are being caught.

Little Sioux River (Clay): Channel catfish fishing is good using cut bait.

Lake Pahoja (Lyon): Bluegill fishing is good around submerged brush using small worms and wax worms. Most fish are between 6 and 7 inches. Largemouth bass fishing is good for smaller fish. Crappie fishing is fair.

Rock River (Lyon): Catfish fishing is good using cut bait.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Walleye fishing is excellent trolling crankbaits or live bait in deeper water. Remember Clear Lake has a 14-inch minimum length for walleye. Yellow bass fishing is fair. Some yellows are being caught in deeper water with live bait. A few white bass are being caught trolling crankbaits in shallower water.

Beeds Lake (Franklin): Crappie fishing is fair to good using small jigs and minnows. The fish are between 8 and 11 inches. Bluegills are hitting pieces of night crawler near shore.

Upper and Lower Pine Lake (Hardin): Crappie fishing is fair using minnows and small jigs around the downed trees and rocky shoreline areas in the Upper Lake. Catfish are hitting in the creek between the upper and lower lake. Bluegill fishing is good using small pieces of night crawler near shore.

Smith Lake (Kossuth): Largemouth bass fishing is good. Spinner baits and jerk baits are working the best. Remember Smith Lake has an 18-inch minimum length on bass. Channel catfish angling is good using chicken liver and dead chubs.

Lake Catherine (Winnebago): Bluegill fishing has been good using small jigs or night crawlers.

Rice Lake (Winnebago and Worth): Bullhead fishing is excellent using night crawlers. Fish the windy shoreline for the best action.

Lake Cornelia (Wright): Fishing is excellent for 9 to 11-inch bullheads using night crawlers. Walleyes are being caught trolling crankbaits and drifting leeches.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Fishing is good to excellent for white bass on twisters or while trolling crankbaits for walleye. Lots of 12 to 15-inch fish are being caught. Walleye fishing is good trolling crankbaits. Most fish are 13 to 16 inches. Catfish fishing is excellent on a variety of baits, but especially using leeches, cut bait or night crawlers around the rocky areas.

Black Hawk Lake (Sac): Fishing for channel catfish is excellent on a variety of baits. Bullhead fishing is good on night crawlers.

Moorehead Lake (Ida): Fishing is good for catfish.

Swan Lake (Carroll): Anglers are catching 7 to 9-inch bluegills using small hair jigs under a bobber close to shore.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Southwest

Farm Ponds: Bluegill, largemouth bass, and channel catfish are biting well.

Nine Eagles (Decatur): Some nice bluegill can be caught from the outside edges of the vegetation line. Several mid-sized largemouth bass have been caught near shore.

Icaria (Adams): Several mid-sized walleyes are being caught on jigs or jigs and minnows. Several largemouth bass up to 16 inches can be caught near shoreline structure. Fishing is good for 7 to 9-inch crappies near the fish mounds. Some 7 to 8-inch bluegills can be caught from the fish mounds on night crawlers. The lake is full and running over. Water clarity is approximately 3 ½ feet at the dam.

Little River (Decatur): A few crappies are biting just off shore on jigs or minnows. Anglers have been catching some bluegill. Some walleye are starting to bite on night crawlers and leeches. Channel catfish are starting to bite in the rocks. Water clarity is approximately 4 feet at the dam.

Wilson (Taylor): Bluegill fishing is good on jigs or night crawlers. Some channel catfish are biting on stink baits or liver.

Windmill (Taylor): Several bluegills are being caught using jigs or night crawlers fishing near the dam. Some channel catfish have been caught on liver.

Green Valley (Union): Fishing is good for channel catfish on night crawlers, stink bait or liver off silt dikes or in shallow bays. Some bluegills are biting on night crawlers or wax worms. Several nice-sized largemouth bass have been caught near shore. Water clarity is approximately 4 feet at the dam.

Three Mile (Union): Some nice bluegills are being caught on night crawlers or wax worms. Walleyes are starting to bite on night crawlers and leeches over the mounds. Some muskies have been caught near cover. Largemouth bass fishing is excellent near shoreline cover. Water clarity is about 4 feet at the dam.

Twelve Mile (Union): Walleyes are being caught, but most are 12 inches. Anglers are picking up largemouth bass up to 17 inches with most between 11 and 13 inches. The lake is full and running over. Water clarity is about 4 feet at the dam.

Badger Creek (Madison): Some channel catfish can be caught in the warm shallow water. Some bluegills are still biting well near the rocks of the jetties and in areas near shoreline access.

Criss Cove (Madison): Some bluegills are biting in the coves.

Three Fires (Taylor): Crappie fishing is fair. Largemouth bass are easily caught and most are between 10 and 15 inches. Bluegill fishing is excellent with several 7 to 8-inch fish being caught. Some nice channel catfish can be caught on liver or stink baits. The lake is full and easily usable. The water has about two feet of clarity.

Grade Lake (Clarke): Anglers are catching some nice bluegill near shore and in the coves.

Fogle Lake (Ringgold): Some crappies are biting near shore at dusk and dawn. Several bluegills are being caught on night crawlers. Largemouth bass are biting well near shoreline cover. The channel catfish are biting on stink baits.

Walnut Creek Marsh (Ringgold): Bluegills are biting well near shore.

West Osceola (Clarke): Largemouth bass fishing is good near shore and around the trees. Many small crappies can be caught from the dam or near the shoreline areas with trees. Some mid-sized bluegill can be caught on night crawlers.

Contact: Gary Sobotka (641) 464-3108 for information on the above area lakes.

Big Creek (Polk): Fishing is good for 6 to 9-inch crappies throughout the lake. Try white jigs or jigs tipped with minnows and cast just beyond the weed edge. This is a great location to take kids fishing right now. Largemouth bass are also being caught.

Hickory Grove (Story): Fishing has been good for crappies and bluegills.

Easter Lake (Polk): Bluegills, largemouth bass and channel catfish are being caught periodically.

Saylorville (Polk): Some white bass are still being caught below the dam. Crappies, largemouth and bluegills are being caught in the flooded coves.

Red Rock and Robert's Creek (Marion): White bass are being caught in the main lake. Try using crankbaits that rattle, spinners, spoons or white jigs.

Don Williams (Boone): Crappie fishing is good. Anglers are using white jigs, tipped with minnows in the brush piles, in 4 to 5 feet of water. A few catfish are also being caught on night crawlers and stink bait. Several walleyes are being caught here as well.

Contact: Ben Dodd (515) 432-2823, Ext.108, for information on the above area lakes

Orient (Adair): Channel catfish are fair during the day on prepared baits with an average size of 20 inches. Bluegills are moving in to shore and can be caught on small jigs. Largemouth bass fishing is good using plastic worms with a slow retrieve.

Nodaway (Adair): Bluegill fishing is fair using small jigs tipped with night crawlers. Crappies are slow, but a few are being caught around brush piles with minnows. Channel catfish fishing is good using liver.

Greenfield (Adair): Bluegill fishing is good with fish moving into shore to spawn. Largemouth bass are being caught using plastic baits and spinner baits. Channel catfish fishing has been slow.

Mormon Trail (Adair): Bluegills are moving to the pea gravel near the south shore to spawn. Channel catfish fishing is fair using liver around jetties and shallow bays.

Littlefield (Audubon): Crappie fishing has slowed, but a few are being caught drifting a jig and minnow. Bluegills are fair casting a small jig tipped with night crawlers. Channel catfish fishing has been good in shallow bays and corners of the dam using stink bait.

Anita (Cass): Anglers are catching 7 to 8-inch bluegill using jigs from shore and around the jetties. Channel catfish, from 2 to 6 pounds, are being caught on night crawlers and blood bait. Largemouth bass fishing has been good for fish up to 18 inches. Crankbaits and jigs have been used around brush piles and rock piles.

DeSoto Bend (Harrison): A few walleyes have been caught drifting night crawlers around sunken trees. Crappie fishing is slow. Channel catfish fishing is good on outside bend close to shore in the rocks. Dip baits with a red worm has been producing 2 to 4-pound catfish.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Fishing for crappies is fair in the canals using minnows with bobber or small jigs. A few wipers are also being caught. Channel catfish fishing is good drifting cut bait.

Arrowhead (Pottawattamie): Anglers are catching 7 to 8-inch bluegills using jigs with night crawlers. Channel catfish are good using liver and prepared bait close to shore around jetties.

Prairie Rose (Shelby): Fishing is fair for 7 to 8-inch crappies, which have moved away from shore. Channel catfish is good fishing shallow bays with dead minnows and night crawlers. A few largemouth bass are being caught using a slow presentation.

Farm ponds are good for largemouth bass, bluegills and channel catfish. Be sure to ask permission from the landowner first.

Contact: Bryan Hayes (712) 769-2587 for information on the above area lakes.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 to 19: Water levels in all pools are below flood stage. Water temperature at Muscatine is 72 degrees. Water level at Muscatine is 6.06 feet but will be rising slightly due to the recent rains.

White bass fishing has been good below the dams using jigs and twister tails.

Fishing has been good at the steel dam on the **Rock River** and white bass are being caught up **Sylvan Slough** and along the Davenport riverfront.

Walleye and sauger fishing is good on **Sylvan Slough** in Pool 16.

Crappies are biting in the backwaters and **Sunset Marina** as well as at **West Lake Park**. Catfishing is good using leeches along rocks. Also try off the mouths of tributaries that are running mud after the weekend rains.

Lake Odessa (Louis): Anglers are catching lots of catfish. Shad guts and stink baits are the baits of choice.

Lake Darling (Washington): The two inches of rain over the weekend has made the water muddy. Anglers were doing well on crappies and bluegills in the shallow water last Friday. The yellow twister tail jig seems to be the lure of choice for the crappies.

Lake Geode (Henry): Bluegills can be caught off the nests. Look for the fish to be spooky as the nests are only being built, and the males are not tied to the nest protecting the eggs.

Lake Belva Deer (Keokuk): Catfishing has been good with shrimp and stink baits working the best. Bluegill fishing was also very good with the fish being in shallow. A small jig tipped with a piece of worm or a wax worm works the best.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappies have been hitting small jigs in shallow water. Walleyes have been hitting night crawlers being trolled or around drop-offs and underwater islands. Channel catfish have been biting on night crawlers and liver.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs fished around the weed lines and the flooded timber. Largemouth bass have been hitting on a variety of artificial lures.

Lake Wapello (Davis): Channel catfish have been biting on night crawlers and liver. Largemouth bass have been hitting a variety of artificial baits fished around the

pallet structures and piles of cedar trees. Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs fished near the shoreline.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Channel catfish have been biting on night crawlers and liver. Crappies have been hitting on small jigs. Largemouth bass have been hitting around the shoreline and the areas with flooded timber.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): Bluegills should be spawning and can be caught in the shallows on small pieces of worm. Some anglers are also picking up a few walleyes trolling crankbaits along rocks and weeds.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson): The channel catfish are moving up in the rocks to spawn and can be caught on a variety of live baits. Action should continue to pick up as the water temperature rises.

Pleasant Creek (Linn): Largemouth bass are biting on about anything. Try crankbaits, plastic worms or live bait for best results. White bass have been hitting on minnow imitations. The best action has been around sunset. A few walleyes are also being caught either by trolling crankbaits or using leeches on the bottom.

Hannan Lake (Benton): The bluegills are up spawning here and can be caught on small worms or wax worms. Largemouth bass are also being caught on a variety of artificial lures.

Kent Park (Johnson): Anglers are catching bluegills and largemouth bass. The bluegills should be fairly shallow and can be caught on wax worms or worms. Largemouth are cruising the shallows and hitting artificial lures and night crawlers.

Skunk River (Washington and Henry): The river is bank full with some minor flooding occurring around Washington County and south.

Iowa River (Louisa and Muscatine): The river is about one foot below being bank full and still rising.

Cedar River (Linn): With rising water level, fishing has slowed. However, channel catfish can still be picked up on liver, stink bait, and night crawlers.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: Water levels on the Mississippi River are projected to fall, but that could change, depending on possible rains throughout the week. Clarity remains fair to good and water temperature is 73 degrees. On Tuesday, river stage was 6.87 feet at Guttenberg, 9.5 feet at Dubuque and 7.6 feet at Bellevue. The Mississippi should crest by midweek and then begin to fall. Several species of fish have been biting recently and location has been key. As a general rule, if you have not caught a fish in 10 to 15 minutes, move to another area to try to locate fish. Keep your eyes open for areas with actively feeding fish or places where fish tend to congregate such as wing dams, woody structure and rocky areas. Now is the time to come fish the river; however, unstable weather patterns can turn off the bite suddenly. Water levels and temperatures have been stable making for great fishing.

Bluegill fishing remains good right now, but can be spotty. Fish the spillways at **Lock and Dams 9 and 10**, as well as the backwater areas near brush. Some anglers are also catching bluegills fishing in deeper water. Float a worm on a bobber and keep moving to find active fish. Bluegill fishing has been good in the tailwaters and next

to the boat ramps in **Pools 12 to 15**. Use a piece of night crawler fished under a bobber in the brush and along the rocks for bluegill.

A few crappies are being caught in the backwaters in **Pools 12 to 15**. Fish around the snags in the backwater sloughs for best success.

Fishing for freshwater drum is good to excellent in all locations in **Pools 9 to 15** using a simple sliding sinker and a night crawler. Drum are found mostly in current situations and you do not need a boat to catch them. Tailwater areas and wing dams are good areas to try for drum.

Largemouth and smallmouth bass fishing is very good in **Pools 9 to 15** on a variety of lures including small spinners, crankbaits, jigs and soft plastics. Fish the shorelines (main channel borders and backwater lakes) around logs, riprap or vegetation. Look for a combination of rock and wood and you will find bass.

Walleye fishing is fair to good in **Pools 9 to 15** along the wing dams. Use night crawlers or leeches on a three-way rig trolled on the upstream face of the wing dams. Try tossing a jig with a twister tail or night crawler along the face of the wing dam and reel back. Try to keep your bait or lure in contact with rock as you work along the dam. Anglers are still reporting good catches of walleye in Minnesota Slough (**Pool 9**).

Channel catfish are good in **Pools 9 to 15** as they are moving onto the rocks to spawn. The best baits for this type of fishing are night crawlers or leeches fished under a bobber floated over the rocks or try stink bait. Anglers are also catching channel catfish along the wing dams. A few flathead catfish are showing up in the creel as well. Try fishing in the tailwaters of the lock and dams and also log jams or rocks with woody snags for this fun to catch fish. Fish the side channels and look for rocks or submerged trees and use live bait, like night crawlers, minnows, small bluegills or drum for flatheads.

If you are looking to catch a mixed bag of fish, try fishing the DNR boat ramp in Guttenberg (**Pool 11**). Bluegill, freshwater drum, smallmouth bass, and sauger are all currently biting in this area.

Cedar River (Mitchell, Floyd and Chickasaw): Smallmouth bass are biting on purple, orange or yellow twister tails, and smaller tube jigs below the dams. Channel catfish are hitting chubs.

Cedar River (Bremer and Black Hawk): Walleye and smallmouth bass fishing is good when river conditions are stable. Channel catfish are biting below the Waverly and Cedar Falls dams.

Maquoketa River (Delaware): Channel catfish are hitting on night crawlers or dead baits fished on the bottom. Walleye fishing is good on jigs tipped with a night crawler or crankbaits. Smallmouth bass are hitting crankbaits or jigs tipped with a night crawler or twister tail.

Shell Rock River (Butler and Bremer): Channel catfish are good below dams and the mouths of creeks. Fish on the bottom using night crawlers or dead cut baits. Some anglers are catching catfish on jigs and twister tails.

Turkey (Clayton) and **Upper Iowa rivers** (Howard, Winneshiek and Allamakee): Water conditions are high and turbid. Conditions should improve by the end of the week barring further heavy rains.

Upper Iowa River (Winneshiek and Allamakee): The river is a little cloudy, but still fishable. Fishing for smallmouth bass is good light-colored twister tails and floating

crankbaits. A few walleye are being caught on slow-moving jigs fished near the bottom. Anglers are also catching northern pike.

Black Hawk County Lakes and Ponds: The water temperature has risen and crappie and bluegill fishing is good. Fish for crappies using minnows and/or jigs next to structure. Bluegills are hitting on a piece of night crawler suspended under a bobber near shore. Some anglers are catching largemouth bass using crankbaits.

Casey Lake in Hickory Hills Park (Tama): Fishing is good for bluegills off the jetties or the old beach using wax worms or a piece of night crawler suspended under a bobber. Also, try artificial flies on fly rods for bluegills feeding at the surface.

Lake Delhi (Delaware): Channel catfish are good using dead baits or night crawlers fished on the bottom. Bluegill and crappie fishing has improved around boat docks and structure. Use a small piece of a night crawler or small jigs for bluegills. Fish a jig tipped with a minnow or a plain minnow under a slip bobber for hungry crappies. Walleyes are also biting.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Bluegills are being caught near the beds. Largemouth bass fishing is good on a wide variety of artificial lures. Crappies (9 to 14 inches) are being caught in deeper water using silver-flaked tube jigs.

Lake Meyer (Winneshiek): Bluegills are moving into the beds and good fishing can be found along the shore. The average size is small, but anglers are catching larger fish using angle worms hooked through the head and fished in deeper water (5 to 8 feet). Crappies in the 5 to 9-inch range are being caught near brush piles. Largemouth bass, up to 7 pounds, are moving into the shallows along the east and north sides of the lake. Bass are also biting on artificial frogs and Texas-rigs (plastic worms).

Plainfield Lake (Bremer): Bluegills are biting on jigs tipped with a piece of night crawler or wax worm suspended under a bobber.

Silver Lake (Delaware): Fishing for bluegill and catfish is fair in Silver Lake located in the town of Delhi. For bluegills, try using a piece of night crawler or a wax worm fished under a bobber. Channel catfish are hitting night crawlers or dead cut baits fished on the bottom.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Largemouth bass fishing is picking up. Use slower-moving artificial lures worked along structure, especially in the morning hours. Bluegill and crappie fishing is fair; however, many are small.

Trout Streams: The upper end of trout streams should be relatively clear, while the lower end may be turbid. Most trout streams are fishable within 24 hours of a rain event. Many trout stream stockings are announced and the dates of proposed stockings can be found on the Iowa DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov or by calling the trout stocking hotline at 563-927-5736.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

###